



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
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# Press Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Attorney General McGraw Urges Caution With Fireworks During July 4th Holiday**

Attorney General Darrell McGraw and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warn West Virginia's consumers to exercise caution when celebrating Independence Day. "The July 4th Holiday is a day to celebrate the birth of our nation and to do so with family and friends," McGraw said. "However, it is important to exercise caution if celebrating with fireworks."

Between 2000 and 2006, the CPSC has reports of 49 fireworks-related consumer deaths. More than half of these incidents involved illegal fireworks.

"While many Americans will enjoy the safe and legal use of fireworks," said Acting CPSC Chairman Nancy Nord, "there will be those who will be treated in hospital emergency rooms as a result of using illegal fireworks, misusing fireworks, or due to a firework that has malfunctioned."

On average there are about seven firework-related deaths each year. The CPSC is aware of 11 deaths associated with fireworks in 2006.

Attorney General McGraw continued, "In West Virginia many retail establishments sell fireworks that are legal for use in our State. While they are legal, they are still dangerous and consumers should use caution and strictly follow the safety instructions for use."

McGraw's Consumer Protection Division released figures supplied by the CPSC that estimates there were 9,200 emergency room-treated injuries associated with all fireworks in 2006. Of these injuries, 6,400 occurred during the one month period surrounding the July 4th holiday.

For those consumers who choose to use fireworks, McGraw and the CPSC encourage them to do so safely and legally.

McGraw's office offers the following fireworks safety tips:

1. Never allow young children to play with fireworks.
2. Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before buying or using them.
3. Avoid buying fireworks that come in brown paper packaging, as this is often a sign that the fireworks

were made for professional shows and could pose a danger to consumers.

4. Adults should always supervise fireworks activities. Parents often don't realize that sparklers have caused more injuries to children under age five than any other type of firework. Sparklers burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees – hot enough to melt some metals.
5. Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework device when lighting the fuse. Move back a safe distance immediately after lighting.
6. Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that have not fully functioned. Douse and soak with water and throw them away.
7. Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
8. Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishap.
9. Light one item at a time, then move back quickly.
10. Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them off in metal or glass containers.

For additional information on product safety, including product safety recalls, please visit Attorney General McGraw's website at [www.wvago.gov](http://www.wvago.gov) or contact his consumer hotline, toll-free at 1-800-368-8808.

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